

Edmonton 2025

BETTER, TOGETHER:
COLLABORATE.
INNOVATE.
INSPIRE.



Keynote:
Andrew Watson

Fantasyland Hotel
17700 87 Ave NW, Edmonton, Alberta



FEBRUARY 14, 2025

AISCA Teachers' Convention 2025 AGENDA – Edmonton

8:00–9:00	Registration and Trade Show Opens
9:00–9:15	Opening & Welcome
9:15–10:30	KEYNOTE: Andrew Watson <i>Thinking Creates Learning: The Essentials of Working Memory</i>
10:30–11:00	Wellness Break
11:00–12:00	Concurrent Sessions A
12:00–1:15	Lunch Break
1:15–2:15	Concurrent Sessions B
2:15–2:30	Transition
2:30–3:30	Concurrent Sessions C

11:00 – 12:00 Concurrent Breakout Sessions A						
Cultural Sensitivity in the Classroom All levels Mona Ismaeil	The Surprising Science of Classroom Attention All levels Andrew Watson	Working with Parents All levels Henry Madsen	Where is the Off Button?! All levels Christy Filgate	kiyokewin – Visiting with Community and Métis Education Resources All levels Holly Brandsma	An Introduction to Mental Health Literacy All levels Kathy King	Top 10 Numeracy Activities for Preschool/Kindergarten Angela Hanson
1:15 – 2:15 Concurrent Breakout Sessions B						
Supporting Your Struggling Writers in the Language Arts Classroom Elementary Taryn Mayko	From Research to Classroom: Translating Broad Insights into Teaching Strategies All levels Andrew Watson	Classroom Management: What Works? All levels Henry Madsen	Scheduling/Timetetable Hacks for School Leaders K–12 leaders Ray Battachio	Strategies to Support English as an Additional Language Learners Elementary Lynn Farrugia	Autism and the Classroom All levels Madison Taylor Lesley Xu	Basic Fact Mastery for Junior High Without a Calculator Junior High Angela Hanson
2:30 – 3:30 Concurrent Breakout Sessions C						
Building Mathematical Understanding: Leveraging Number Lines to Support Students with Dyscalculia & Math Challenges All levels Mackenzie Bruce	Representation Matters: Exploring Ableism, Accessibility, and Allyship All levels Katie MacMillan	Spring Camp: Learning Through Adventure Middle/High School Henry Madsen Lana Ohler-Madsen	Proceeding to Permanency K–12 leaders Ray Battachio	Strategies to Support English as an Additional Language Learners Grades 7–12 Lynn Farrugia	The Brain, Emotions, and Stress Junior/High School Madison Taylor Lesley Xu	Math Games Galore: Having Fun with Math for Lower Elementary! Elementary Angela Hanson

KEYNOTE: Andrew Watson**Thinking Creates Learning: The Essentials of Working Memory****All levels**

It just makes sense: to learn, students have to THINK. This simple insight leads to important questions: where does “thinking” happen? How does it work? Why doesn’t it work the way we – and our students – wish it did? To answer these questions, this talk will explore an essential cognitive function: working memory. Students use working memory to connect new information to their prior knowledge. They also use it to reorganize their knowledge into new mental structures. When teachers understand working memory – its function, importance, and limitations – we can anticipate, recognize, and solve the memory problems that hinder learning. Lively and practical, this conversation uses psychology research to make learning easier and teaching more effective.

Mona Ismaeil**Cultural Sensitivity in the Classroom****All levels**

As classrooms become more diverse, it is essential for educators to foster an environment of respect and inclusivity. This workshop is designed to help teachers and school staff understand the importance of cultural and religious sensitivity in educational settings. Participants will learn practical strategies to create a classroom where students from all backgrounds feel valued and respected.

Andrew Watson**The Surprising Science of Classroom Attention****All levels**

All teachers have asked this baffled question: “why don’t students just pay attention?”

Decades of neuroscience and psychology research have shown that – surprise! – attention is not one unified brain process. Instead, the behavior we call “paying attention” results from a just-right balance of three (yes, 3!) distinct mental functions.

When teachers foster those three cognitive processes, children find that ideal cognitive balance where they can focus: in the classroom, while doing homework, and at home.

Henry Madsen**Working with Parents****All levels**

Teachers and parents have the same goal: to ensure high levels of learning for their children. There are times however, when parents don’t understand the broader challenges of working with multiple students with diverse needs. Attend this session to learn strategies to ensure that parents are allies rather than “adversaries”.

Christy Filgate**Where is the Off Button?!****All levels**

Over the past several years, awareness surrounding mental health, and the impact stress has on our lives, has grown. But, did you know that certain types of stress can physically alter brain function, impacting our ability to learn? This session will explore the ‘Stress Response’ and examine how ‘toxic’ stress affects a child’s ability to learn. We will discuss the role specific brain regions have on learning, how stress-related behaviours may present in the classroom, and provide strategies to support students, both at the individual classroom level and across the entire school environment.

Holly Brandsma**kiyokewin – Visiting with Community and Métis Education Resources****All levels**

kiyokewin is visiting in Michif. kiyokewin is a traditional way in which Métis people connect and shape relationships with each other, the land, water, plants, cosmos, and animals. In this session you will learn how kiyokewin can foster learning between educators, students and community more deeply. Rupertsland Institute will share how many initiatives, resources and programs are created through kiyokewin. Explore how meeting the TQS, LQS, and SQS standard of fostering, building and maintaining relationships is woven into authentic Métis resources.

Kathy King**An Introduction to Mental Health Literacy****All levels**

In this session you will gain an understanding of mental health literacy and how it can support you in your work with students, staff and families. You will be introduced to mental health states and recognize that our use of language is important to understanding disorders, obtaining and maintaining good mental health and reducing stigma that can be a barrier to seeking help.

Angela Hanson**Top 10 Numeracy Activities for Preschool/Kindergarten**

This session will explore common neurodevelopmental disorders (NDs) such as ADHD and specific learning disabilities (SLD/LD), as well as how “other brains” process information. We’ll delve into self-regulation and executive functions, including their development and key roles in learning and behavior. Participants will gain insight into how NDs impact emotions, behavior, and social functioning. Finally, we’ll focus on practical strategies for supporting students, such as re-framing behaviors to identify unmet needs, distinguishing between skill and performance deficits, coaching, and “lending” your prefrontal cortex to students. Leave with tips and tricks to better help students succeed.

Taryn Mayko**Supporting Your Struggling Writers in the Language Arts Classroom****Elementary**

This interactive session will focus on using picture books and novels to engage and motivate students to write. It is designed primarily for educators seeking to support struggling writers. It will also provide general strategies that can be easily implemented in any elementary language arts setting and everyone will leave with one or two takeaways.

Andrew Watson**From Research to Classroom: Translating Broad Insights into Teaching Strategies****All levels**

We have talked about the science of working memory and attention. What do teachers do with this new understanding? This workshop – lively and practical – focuses on translating cognitive science into specific classroom strategies.

We will begin by looking at a specific classroom example: a classroom teacher working effectively with their students. With our new perspectives, what areas for improvement can we identify? What specific strategies would we use to accomplish those goals?

We close by applying these new ideas to our own classroom contexts, so that all teachers leave with new, practical ideas.

Henry Madsen**Classroom Management: What Works?**

All levels

Student success is dependent on a teacher's ability to manage a classroom. It is important to recognize that classroom management is not the same as discipline. Classroom management is organization with procedures that ensure instruction and learning can take place effectively. Join this presentation to learn how to create a management plan that promotes learning, and leaves teachers with a smile on their face at the end of the day, knowing their students are learning at high levels.

Ray Battachio**Scheduling/Timetable Hacks for School Leaders**

K-12 Leaders

In a facilitated sharing session, AISCA leaders will highlight how an understanding of key terms and principles found in the Guide to Education and Funding Manual help provide school leaders with the latitude and flexibility they need to creatively timetable/schedule their school. This hands-on session promises that attendees will gain valuable tips and tricks into creative timetabling/scheduling through lively discussion and sharing with colleagues.

Lynn Farrugia**Strategies to Support English as an Additional Language Learners (K-6)**

We are welcoming more English as an Additional Language (EAL) Learners to our schools and classrooms than ever before. What do we need to know about our newcomer students and what are some of the very best strategies and supports we can provide for them? Please join me as I will share the latest research based practical ideas that I have found most successful and some of my favourite anecdotes from my years of working with these amazing students.

Madison Taylor & Lesley Xu**Autism and the Classroom**

All levels

Statistically, there is a high likelihood that someone in each classroom would fit the profile of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This workshop explores diagnostic criteria and what autism could look like, what to look for in your own students, and strategies from a multidisciplinary team to support the autistic brain style in your classroom in a neurodiversity-affirming way.

Angela Hanson**Basic Fact Mastery for Junior High Without a Calculator**

Are your junior high students still struggling with basic facts? This session will show you our simple yet effective Thinking Strategies approach to help your students develop fluency including "chunking" facts into groups for ease of learning, developing efficient thinking strategies for each chunk, and the importance of practice. You will leave this session with a tried-and-true approach for achieving basic fact mastery and ways to incorporate this into your classroom practices.

Mackenzie Bruce**Building Mathematical Understanding: Leveraging Number Lines to Support Students with Dyscalculia and Math Challenges**

All levels

In this session, we will explore how to effectively use number lines as a powerful tool to support students with dyscalculia and other math challenges. Participants will learn strategies for teaching math concepts such as number sense, operations, and fractions through the use of number lines, making abstract concepts more concrete and accessible and providing students with one unifying manipulative and visual across concepts and grade levels. This session will focus on practical applications for integrating number lines into daily math instruction to enhance student confidence, problem-solving skills, and mathematical understanding, particularly for students who struggle with traditional methods.

Katie MacMillan**Representation Matters: Exploring Ableism, Accessibility, and Allyship**

All levels

A session to explore, define, and deconstruct the concepts of ableism, accessibility, and allyship as they relate to representation of disability and as I have come to understand them through my experiences parenting a physically disabled child, teaching in the public school system for fifteen years, and now, as a talent agent exclusively representing disabled talent.

Henry Madsen & Lana Ohler-Madsen**Spring Camp: Learning Through Adventure**

Middle/High

Canoeing, climbing, biking, nature interpretation, survival: These are just a few of the experiences available to students involved in adventure based field trips. Of course the students learn new activities and challenge themselves to push their comfort levels. Students also learn specific curricular outcomes in many of the more academic subjects. Join this session to learn about adventure based field trips in the Rocky Mountains.

Ray Battachio**Proceeding to Permanency**

K-12 Leaders

If you work in an Alberta independent school or an Alberta Accredited International School, have an Interim Professional Certificate (IPC), and are considering applying for your Permanent Professional Certificate (PPC) then this is the session for you! Learn to navigate the permanent professional certification application process including, calculating eligible teaching time and teaching experience! Learn about the evaluation process and how you will be assessed, so that you know in advance what to expect, and how to be successful! As the Senior Manager responsible for AISCA's Designated Signing Authority (DSA) program, Ray Battachio leads a team of twenty-five DSAs (evaluators) who have evaluated hundreds of teachers for PPC. He will provide teachers considering applying for a PPC with tips to successfully navigate the process.

Lynn Farrugia**Strategies to Support English as an Additional Language Learners (Gr. 7-12)**

We are welcoming more English as an Additional Language (EAL) Learners to our schools and classrooms than ever before. What do we need to know about our newcomer students and what are some of the very best strategies and supports we can provide for them? Please join me as I will share the latest research based practical ideas that I have found most successful and some of my favourite anecdotes from my years of working with these amazing students.

Madison Taylor & Lesley Xu**The Brain, Emotions, and Stress**

Junior/High School

Are your students having big reactions to small problems? This workshop explains the physiological responses that occur in our bodies in response to stress and fear, how that maps to our emotions, and ways to support your students in regulating their emotional responses with a trauma-informed lens.

Angela Hanson**Math Games Galore: Having Fun with Math for Lower Elementary!**

Need some fresh, new ideas for games and activities that kids LOVE to play? A multitude of engaging games supporting numeracy and basic facts will be introduced and played during the session. These games, from The MathImagine Foundation resources, are ideal for individual learning, group learning, learning centres, and whole-class instruction in lower Elementary. Be ready to participate, have fun, and win fantastic prizes!